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423 unless it is at the critical period, the period of the critical operation, of the agricultural year. One ryot told me, when questioned on this point, that he had recently gone to great expense to buy an extra bit of land to serve as a seed bed to the lands he had adjoining. In that way he would save time for the critical operation. But very seldom are villagers willing to make the smallest sacrifice of area or value in order to have their lands continuous instead of scattered. I can only account for this by supposing that the fragmentation in actual practice makes less difference than might be supposed. With regard to this question also, the only definite conclusion I have come to is that more information is required.

000 *Some urgent reforms.*—But while it is advisable to wait for further information before embarking on such heroic measures as altering the law of inheritance or throwing villages into the melting pot, at least in South India, there are many reforms concerning which no more discussion or enquiry is needed. To stop starving the Agricultural Department is one; to stop starving the Industrial Department another. Extension and improvement of roads and railways is urgently needed. There appears to be no reason for delay in giving the medical service the powers it requires in order to stamp out plague and to utilize fully its knowledge of the best means of combating cholera. That accomplished, the serious organization, with adequate resources, of the campaign against malaria, hook-worm and the other great pestilences should naturally follow.

Further, there is an intimate connexion between agricultural progress and educational reform. The idea that elementary education should develope the capacity for facing the problems of life intelligently and with determination, has not yet been acted on in India very completely or very successfully.

A smaller matter, but still one of sufficient importance, is the clearing up of the unimaginable chaos of Indian weights and measures. Decades ago the first step was taken towards the adoption of the metric system, by fixing the statutory weight of the seer at one kilogramme. But nothing has been done to make people understand that a seer is a definite weight. While India •[804] has seers innumerable—in the same district the seer may vary from 22 to 180 times the weight of a rupee—I doubt if a true seer can be found outside French territory. Side by side with the seer or kilo, we want the "Sirkar Measure," which should obviously be the volume of water which weighs a seer. The Government itself muddles up all its statistical statements by wandering about between seers and pounds, tons and maunds. If it started by working out its own arithmetic in true seers and Sirkar measures, and imposed the same on the railways, kept sample weights and measures in all police stations, post offices and schools, and arranged for the supply at cheap rate of certified weights and measures to all who wished to purchase, the establishment of the metric system in weights and volumes would be accomplished without difficulty. Metres could follow. The boon to India would be great; the indirect benefit to the whole British Empire might be greater.

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